

ZONING

City of Charleston

Signage Guidelines

Are you subject to Design Review?

Before you begin to design your sign package, you must first ascertain whether the property in question falls within the jurisdiction of either our Board of Architectural Review (BAR), or our Commercial Corridor Design Review Board (CCDRB). After you review these zoning requirements, you may click on the website address for general signage guidelines for either BAR(www.charlestoncity.info/shared/docs/0/signage--general%20&%20site-specific.pdf) or CCDRB ([www.charlestoncity.info/shared/docs/0/ccdrb%20general%20signage%20guidelines%20 2 .pdf](http://www.charlestoncity.info/shared/docs/0/ccdrb%20general%20signage%20guidelines%202.pdf)).

Approximately 90% of the proposed signage in the City of Charleston falls under one of these boards and would be subject to review by the design review board staff (you would only go before the actual board if appealing a staff decision). You may call the zoning office at #(843)973-7243, or #(843)724-3781 to find this information. Please know the exact physical address and/or TMS#, and unit/suite# if applicable when you call so we can properly identify the property.

*Note: Please realize that if the property is subject to design review, then your proposed signage must meet the requirements for **both** Zoning and the design review guidelines.

Do you know the Zoned District of the property?

Again, you may call the zoning office at #973-7243 to find this information. Please know the exact physical address and/or TMS#, and unit/suite # if applicable when you call so we can properly identify the property.

For all signs:

Sign face area is measured as the smallest rectangle that encompasses the entire sign face including graphics and pictures (blank space counts). You may find the complete sign ordinance in the same list where you found these submittal requirements. You may also refer to Table 1.2 Allowed Sign Types by Zoning District, on the same list for an overview of the allowed signage. You should have current pictures of the building and the immediate neighbors included in your sign package for comparison. You should include pictures of any existing signage on the property. You will need an accurate rendering (hand drawn or computer rendering) of any proposed sign, noting exact colors and materials

and proposed illumination, and a drawing or picture of where each sign will go. You may include color and/or material samples if you need to in order to be clear as to what you are proposing.

Façade Signs:

Façade signs fall into 3 general categories;

1. Regular, flat façade signs:

In most zoned districts, facade signage may cover up to 10% of any one facade or portion of the facade that pertains to your business. You will need to have the height and width of the facade and of the proposed and existing signage. The SH Overlay zone and the RO District do not allow façade signs, and the CT District limits them to 9 sqft.

2. Right angle, or blade signs:

In zoned districts allowing right angle signs, the size limit is 9 sqft, so you need to have the height and width of the proposed and existing signage. You may not have right angle signs in conjunction with other types of façade signs on the same facade. The SH Overlay zone and the RO District do not allow right angle signs.

3. Awning/canopy signs:

In zoned districts allowing awning/canopy signs, the sign shall not exceed 20% of a single surface area of a canopy or awning. You must have the dimensions of the surface where you want to place the sign, as well as the height and width of the proposed and existing signage. The SH Overlay zone and the RO District do not allow awning/canopy signs.

Freestanding signs:

Size of freestanding signage is based on zoned district, and on the number of tenants on the property. You need a scaled site plan or survey of the parcel, pictures of the place you want to put the sign and pictures of any existing signage. You also need the overall height of the proposed sign as well as the height and width of the sign face. Please include dimensions for any existing freestanding signage as well.

Window signs:

Window signs may cover no more than 20% of any one window, and are limited to the ground floor only. You will need to have the height and width of the window and of the proposed and existing signage. The SH Overlay zone and the RO District do not allow window signs.

Submitting your sign package:

When you have all of the required information, you apply at the Zoning Office on the 3rd floor of 75 Calhoun St. You need a sign permit application, available at the office or on this website on the DD&P page under "Documents and Forms." If all of your signage (front and back count for double-sided signs) total < 75 sqft, the fee is \$50.00, if it is = or > 75 sqft, the fee is \$100.00. However, in case you have enough signs that you need more than one application, we charge per application. You can fit 3 signs per application.

After you have my approval and the approval of any applicable design review board staff, we will give you copies of our approval, and you must go down the hall to Building Inspections to get your permit issued. Their main # is 724-7433. Their fee is based on the overall price of the job. It will depend on who is here in our office, and the clarity of your submittal whether you can get an approval or disapproval on the spot.